

REMARKS

REITERATION OF PREVIOUS ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING PATENTABILITY OF THE CLAIMS AS ORIGINALLY FILED

The first Office Action in this application erroneously rejected all of the claims (Claims 13-30) as allegedly anticipated by *Bartholomew et al.* This rejection was rebutted in a previously filed response. Among the reasons *Bartholomew et al.* fails as a §102 or a §103 reference is that *Bartholomew et al.*'s actions relating to voice mailboxes are not comparable to the claimed subject matter's elements and actions relating to voice mail servers. The claims relate to elements and actions that facilitate communication between voice mail servers that may be operated by different service providers and/or in different geographic regions. *Bartholomew et al.* operates generally in a homogeneous network that does not address and has no need to address the problems solved by the claimed subject matter. Thus, the claims as originally filed are allowable.

AMENDMENT OF THE CLAIMS TO FURTHER PROSECUTION OF THIS APPLICATION

Even though the claims as originally filed are allowable, some of the claims have been amended to more particularly point out their respective subject matter. Claims 27 – 30 have been cancelled to speed prosecution of the remaining claims. The remaining claims (Claims 13 – 26), respectively, are distinguishable over *Bartholomew et al.* at least for the reasons summarized below.

Claim 13

- *Preamble – A method for validating messaging transactions between customers served by voice mail servers located in different geographic regions, operated by different service providers, or both.*

Bartholomew et al. does not teach nor suggest validation of messaging transactions between voice mail servers. The Office Action compares the claim's voice mail servers to *Bartholomew et al.*'s voice mailboxes. Such comparison is inappropriate at least because the elements and actions relating to validation of messaging transactions

between voice mail servers differ from the elements and actions involved in sending a message from one mailbox to another as explained in further detail below.

- *Creating a messaging directory with information on characteristics of respective voice mail servers.*

Bartholomew et al. does not teach nor suggest a messaging directory (or any other element) that includes information on the respective characteristics of voice mail servers.

- *Querying the messaging directory to identify a first voice mail server associated with a caller originating a message and a second voice mail server associated with the recipient of the message.*

This action of Claim 13 queries the messaging directory for at least two pieces of identification: (1) the identity of the first voice mail server; and (2) the identity of the second voice mail server. As noted, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an element that includes both pieces of identification. Further, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an action of querying an element for the two pieces of identification.

The inclusion of the querying action in Claim 13 also further demonstrates the failure of the Office Action's comparison between the claim's voice mail servers and *Bartholomew et al.*'s voice mailboxes. In *Bartholomew et al.*, it is unnecessary to query an element for the identity of a voice mailbox associated with a caller originating a message to be sent from his or her voice mail system. Presumably, the caller has provided the identity by giving his or her name or number. It is also unnecessary to query an element for the identity of a voice mail box associated with the recipient of the message. Presumably, the caller again has provided the identity by giving the name or number of the called party. Yet, the claimed action of identifying the voice mail servers is important and necessary as a precursor to finding information on the respective characteristics of the voice mail servers that will determine whether the messaging transaction may take place.

- *Based on the identities of the first and second voice mail servers, causing the messaging directory to check the respective characteristics of the two voice mail servers to determine whether the message may be transferred between the first and second voice mail servers.*

As noted above, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an element that includes information on the identities and characteristics of the two voice servers involved in a transaction. In addition, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an action of querying an element to check for respective characteristics of two other elements to determine whether a message may be transferred between the two other elements.

The Office Action stated that identifying a recipient voice mailbox reads on determining whether a message may be transferred between the first and second voice mail servers. This rejection is respectfully traversed. Identifying a voice mailbox is not the same as determining whether a message may be transferred between two voice servers. The characteristics of the voice mail servers (such as their configurations, and regulatory and business rules that apply to them, etc.) determine whether a message may be transferred between them. If the characteristics are incompatible, even if the servers are identified, then no message may be transferred between them. Thus, the claimed subject matter is readily distinguishable over *Bartholomew et al.*

Claim 19

- *Preamble – A process for determining the identity of a first voice mail server associated with an originating caller that has left a message with a second voice mail server associated with a receiving caller that may seek to respond to the message.*

Bartholomew et al. does not teach nor suggest determining the identity of voice mail servers in the conditions set out in the preamble of Claim 19. The Office Action compares the claim's voice mail servers to *Bartholomew et al.*'s voice mailboxes. Such comparison is inappropriate as explained in further detail below.

- *Ascertaining an identifier associated with the originating caller;*
- *Using the identifier to determine an identity code that identifies the voice mail server;*
- *Using the identity code to determine information including the location of the first voice mail server, the identity of the service provider operating the first voice mail server, and the existence of agreements between the first service provider and other service providers.*

Bartholomew et al. does not teach nor suggest an element that includes information on voice mail servers involved in the transaction. In particular, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an element that includes information on the location of a first voice mail server, the identity of the service provider operating the first voice mail server, and the existence of agreements between the first service provider and other service providers.

- *Using the information to determine whether the receiving caller may communicate with the first voice mail server in response to the message.*

As noted above, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an element that includes information on voice mail servers involved in the transaction. In addition, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an action of using such information to determine whether the receiving caller may communicate with a first voice mail server in response to the message.

Claim 20

- *Preamble – A method for validating the passage of data between customers of different companies operating messaging servers that serve different areas.*

Bartholomew et al. does not teach nor suggest validation of data passed between customers of different companies operating messaging servers that serve different areas. The Office Action compares the claim's voice mail servers to *Bartholomew et al.*'s voice mailboxes. Such comparison is inappropriate. As noted, the preamble refers to different companies operating messaging servers, and substitution of voice mailboxes for messaging servers in the subject matter of the claim is not possible.

- *Causing a messaging directory to include information relating to the passage of data between customers of different companies operating messaging servers that serve different areas.*

Bartholomew et al. does not teach nor suggest a messaging directory or other element that includes information on respective messaging servers involved in a transaction.

- *Causing the messaging directory to use the information including business rules, regulatory rules or both to determine whether the data may be passed between the customers' messaging servers.*

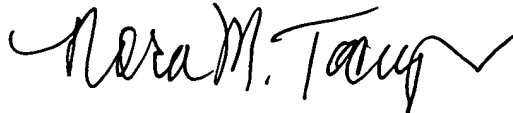
As noted, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an element that includes information on messaging servers. In addition, *Bartholomew et al.* does not teach nor suggest an action of causing an element to use information including business rules, regulatory rules, or both to determine whether data may be passed between messaging servers.

The subject matter of the remaining independent claims (Claims 13, and 19-20) has been demonstrated above to be distinguishable and patentable over *Bartholomew et al.* The remaining claims (Claims 14-18 and 21-26) are also patentable at least for the reason that they are dependent upon allowable independent claims. In addition, the subject matter of the dependent claims is separately patentable from the independent claims.

Conclusion

For at least the reasons above, which identify specific claim limitations and patentable distinctions over *Bartholomew et al.*, Claims 13 - 26 are allowable. *Bartholomew et al.* does not disclose nor teach each and every limitation of these claims. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of the previous Office Actions and to issue a Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora M. Tocups", with a checkmark at the end.

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